United Nations S/PV.7421

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7421st meeting

Monday, 30 March 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-09001 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Chambas, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Abuja.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chambas.

Mr. Chambas: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Council on Boko Haram.

As Council members are aware, over the past few years the violence and brutality of Boko Haram attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, as well as in neighbouring countries, have intensified. Today as we meet, though weakened, the group continues to commit horrendous acts against civilians, including women and children. We have received reports that children in particular have been abducted, abused, recruited, maimed and killed. Schools in north-eastern Nigeria are no longer safe places of learning, as many of them continue to be attacked, looted and destroyed. Several schools in the areas targeted by Boko Haram in Cameroon and the Niger also remain closed. In 2014, the group also commenced using young girls as suicide bombers in attacks in populated urban areas. We have also observed an alarming trend of children being used by the group as human shields. Boko Haram's recent declaration of allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), whether for publicity reasons or to tap into ISIL's support, is also of concern as it is sends a clear signal that Boko Haram's agenda goes well beyond Nigeria.

The impact of Boko Haram attacks has been manifold. Overlapping with the regional impact of other crises, notably that in the Central African Republic, countries such as Cameroon, Chad and the Niger are now facing humanitarian and human rights consequences as a result of the group's activities. Significant numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons are adding pressure on host communities that are already food insecure and fragile. I will defer to the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, who will delve further into the impact of Boko Haram activities on the humanitarian situation across the Lake Chad Basin region and the challenges therein. However, allow me to raise a number of human rights concerns.

A recent evaluation mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the far north of Cameroon confirmed that Boko Haram has committed numerous human rights abuses, including indiscriminate and targeted killings, abductions of women and girls, the use of children in military operations, the widespread destruction of property and systematic shooting or slaughtering of captured men who refuse to join their ranks.

In the Niger, a similar human rights evaluation was conducted to assess the situation in the Diffa region, following a Boko Haram attack in February. The mission reported that Boko Haram had indiscriminately targeted the civilian population, either killing or forcibly turning captured civilians into combatants. Children had also been recruited either for combat roles or as suicide bombers. Since the attack in February, schools in the Diffa region have remained closed, depriving children of the right to be educated. The local economy in the Diffa region is also being negatively affected by a continuing state of emergency. In response to these and other concerns, the United Nations is in the process of scaling up its presence and operations in Nigeria, the Niger and Cameroon. In this regard, we appeal to the international community to support humanitarian efforts in the Lake Chad Basin region.

The response of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) countries to the threat of Boko Haram has been commendable. The joint regional offensive involving Nigerian, Chadian, Cameroonian and Nigerien troops has led to the recapture of several key towns in north-east Nigeria. At the beginning of the year, Boko Haram controlled some 20 local governmental districts in the three north-eastern states of Nigeria. Today, Boko Haram holds only a few areas in Borno state. Moreover,

according to reports from the Nigerian army, on 27 March Boko Haram's headquarters in Gwoza was captured.

The United Nations is supportive of national and regional efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and to ensure that the perpetrators of terrorism are brought to justice. However, in view alleged human rights violations related to the ongoing counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram, we would like to stress that counter-terrorism operations that are perceived by the affected populations to be disproportionate and brutal violate the very norms that we seek to defend. It is therefore essential that the Multinational Joint Task Force and other counter-insurgency operations uphold the rule of law and abide by international human rights standards. This is not only an absolutely vital principle, but also an effective strategy, as communities that believe that their Government seeks to protect them are far more likely to cooperate with the authorities and far less likely to support insurgent groups. In this regard, we welcome the commitment made by the LCBC countries that their operations will be in full compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. We also urge that adequate procedures be put in place to ensure that children being used by Boko Haram are treated as victims and dealt with in accordance with international standards for juvenile justice.

We welcome the decision of leaders of the Economic Commu. ity of Central African States to better coordinate efforts in the fight against Boko Haram and to hold a joint summit with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to adopt a common strategy. We also salute the sacrifices that the countries of the region have made and the solidarity they have shown by uniting to stop the advance of Boko Haram. We equally welcome the efforts of the LCBC and the African Union towards the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force. While we acknowledge that the Force is already engaging Boko Haram, we are ready to support regional efforts as necessary, in line with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy.

I would like to reiterate the Secretary-General's message that a military approach alone will not suffice to contain the Boko Haram threat. The international community can and should play an important role in helping the countries of the region to address the social, economic and political challenges associated with Boko Haram. In doing so, we have a responsibility to look at the problem and its consequences in a way that puts respect for human life and dignity first. It will therefore be critical to follow up the current military operations carried out by the LCBC countries with stabilization measures and restoration of State authority. During this phase, attention would be focused on creating conditions conducive to the provision of needs-based and principled humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations and returnees.

As the Lake Chad Basin countries come together to address the menace of Boko Haram, the international community must also support them in eliminating not only the threat, but also the conditions that allow Boko Haram to thrive. In this regard, it will be important for the United Nations to reiterate its commitment to working with regional countries to bring an end to the ongoing violence and to alleviate the suffering of civilians. The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for West and Central Africa are both already fully engaged in this regard. We are also working on deploying more resources to the subregions to help provide a hands-on approach to assisting the affected Governments.

I cannot conclude without referring to an important development in West Africa, namely, the recent general elections in Nigeria that took place over the weekend. In the preliminary statement of its election observation mission, ECOWAS noted that, despite pockets of incidents and logistical challenges, the general elections of 28 March "met the criteria of being free and transparent".

The mission commended the enthusiasm, maturity, patience and sense of civic responsibility demonstrated by the electorate, and expressed hope that the same spirit of respect for order and discipline would characterize the rest of the electoral process, especially after the election results are announced. On 29 March, the second day of the elections, voting took place in 330 polling stations. There were reports of Boko Haram activity outside Bauchi but, as on the day before, it had no impact on the voting process. In other words, Boko Haram was unable to disrupt the electoral process.

The legitimacy of the next Government will be an important requisite for garnering global support for an effective response to the insurgency and ensuring Nigeria's long-term stability and prosperity. It is our sincere hope that the next Government will remain committed to the subregional fight against Boko Haram.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Chambas for his detailed briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Kang.

Ms. Kang: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian impact of Boko Haram atrocities in northern Nigeria and neighbouring countries. On behalf of the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, I would like to deliver the following statement.

Despite several reports of suspected Boko Haram attacks in Yobe, Gombe and Bomo states, I can report that no additional humanitarian needs have so far emerged as a result of the election. We will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground as the likelihood of electoral violence around the announcement of the results will remain high.

Since a state of emergency was declared in May 2013, the ongoing violent conflict in north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin has forcibly displaced at least 1.5 million people in Nigeria and its neighbours. Boko Haram escalated its campaign throughout 2014, and communities in northern Nigeria have increasingly been caught in the crossfire between the insurgents and the national army. The conflict has caused death and injury on a large scale and destroyed homes and infrastructure. Since the beginning of 2014, Boko Haram has killed more than 7,300 civilians in the three state-of-emergency states. This year alone 1,000 people lost their lives. More than 300 schools have been severely damaged or destroyed. Less than 40 per cent of the health facilities in the affected areas remain operational. Gross human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence and child trafficking, are frequently reported.

The escalation of Boko Haram-related violence in the region continues to hinder access to people in desperate need of humanitarian assistance and is limiting the scope of our response. An overwhelming majority of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) reside within host communities and in camp-like conditions, clustered around schools, churches and mosques. According to the International Organization for Migration, only 10 per cent of the more than 1 million IDPs are in identified and accessible Government-run IDP camps in urban areas. Minimum humanitarian standards for shelter, food, water, sanitation, health and education are not being met in the camps, due to a lack of camp-management and protection capacity. The plight of civilians stranded or hiding in areas that humanitarian organizations are currently unable to reach is very worrying, especially those in areas still under the control of Boko Haram.

As many as 3 million people in northern Nigeria will not be able to meet their basic food needs after July 2015 unless they receive well-targeted humanitarian assistance. While the federal and state authorities have worked hard to provide assistance to many of those fleeing the violence, the overall humanitarian response in north-eastern Nigeria remains poor and fragmented. Only nine operational partners, mostly international non-governmental organizations, are currently active in the three states most affected. In support of the national and state-level emergency management agencies' efforts, those humanitarian partners have undertaken emergency protection programmes that include providing psychological first aid and psychosocial support and registration and support for unaccompanied children, as well as other lifesaving activities in the areas of water, sanitation, health and food distribution. Those programmes, however, are limited in scope, since they mainly target IDPs registered in the Government-run camps.

In addition to insecurity, a lack of donor support is constraining the expansion of the humanitarian footprint. Humanitarian partners are ready to do more and to scale up their efforts. If they are to do so, donor engagement and continued financial support are critical. In addition, accurate and reliable humanitarian data and effective monitoring systems are needed for informed humanitarian planning, effective advocacy and sustained donor support. From 9 to 12 March, 12 emergency directors of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee visited Nigeria to assess the humanitarian situation and identify potential solutions for addressing the current challenges in north-east Nigeria. As a result of their visit, a three-month inter-agency action plan is being developed to support the scaling up of critical protection and lifesaving response efforts and the humanitarian presence in conflict-affected areas in the North-east.

The expansion of Boko Haram's activities is having a significant regional impact. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of 25 March some 74,000 refugees had sought refuge in the far north of Cameroon. Boko Haram cross-border attacks from Nigeria into Cameroon have also

triggered the internal displacement of between 100,000 and 150,000 Cameroonians. In the Niger, 50,000 people have been internally displaced, adding to the 100,000 Nigerian refugees and Nigerien returnees who have sought refuge in the Diffa region of the Niger since May 2014. In Chad, the Boko Haram incursion has resulted in some 33,000 refugees and returnees, as well as 14,500 IDPs, seeking refuge around Lake Chad. In the three affected countries, insecurity and logistical challenges have impeded access, which, in addition to significant funding shortfalls, is preventing a scaled-up humanitarian response. The three Governments have requested international assistance to respond to the most pressing needs, which include protection, food assistance, water, non-food items, health and shelter.

The massive displacement caused by Boko Haram cross-border incursions is placing immense strain on the already depleted resources of host communities, which in some areas are as vulnerable as the displaced themselves. Food is more difficult to find in the market, and in some instances prices have doubled or tripled. In Diffa at the end of 2014, almost a quarter of children aged between 6 and 23 months were suffering from global acute malnutrition. In Chad, more than 30 per cent of those in host communities were food insecure in 2014. In north-eastern Nigeria, an estimated 4.6 million people are currently suffering from food insecurity, and 100,000 children are at risk of severe malnutrition. The Boko Haram crisis is likely to have a broader impact on the Sahel region, since Nigeria traditionally produces almost half the region's cereals. On 15 March, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved $28 million from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund to address the regional humanitarian impact of Boko Haram. We hope that more support from the international community will follow in order to enable humanitarian actors to continue to reach those in need with lifesaving assistance.

The humanitarian community welcomes the regional political commitment to tackle the ongoing violence in the north-east. In the light of the current discussion in the Security Council, it is critical that the Multinational Joint Task Force, as a counter-terrorism force, limit its focus to creating conducive security conditions and an enabling environment for non-military-related interventions, while adhering to international humanitarian law and taking all precautions to avoid civilian casualties.

As the Task Force is a de facto party in conflict, I ask Council members to ensure that its operations remain distinct from civilian-led humanitarian operations. Maintaining distinction between the two is crucial in order to safeguard the actual and perceived neutrality and independence of humanitarian organizations. In addition, the Task Force should not be involved in facilitating the returns of refugees and internally displaced persons, which must be carried out on a voluntary basis in line with international humanitarian law and the Kampala Convention, to which Nigeria is a party.

The humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria and the conflict-affected areas in neigbouring countries remains dire. The conflict continues to have a devastating impact on women, children and young people, as well as on many others who have been traumatized by violence. Additional funding to address the acute humanitarian needs of those affected by the conflict is urgently needed.

So far, local organizations and communities have carried the weight of this response. The Government of Nigeria has stated its willingness and ability to shoulder a significant portion of the operational and financing needs to respond to the crisis. However, support from the international community is also needed to help respond to the urgent humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria. An international humanitarian presence is needed to advise and help coordinate a complex and fast-moving operation and support the provision of the necessary protection measures for the civilians caught up in the conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Kang for her briefing and the important elements contained therein.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.